

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 14-203—sSB 257
Public Health Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING HEPATITIS C TESTING

SUMMARY: This act generally requires licensed primary care physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants (“primary care providers”) to offer to provide or order a hepatitis C screening or diagnostic test for patients born between 1945 and 1965, when providing services to these patients.

The requirement does not apply when the provider reasonably believes that the patient (1) is being treated for a life-threatening emergency, (2) has previously been offered or received a hepatitis C screening test, or (3) lacks the capacity to consent.

Under the act, a “hepatitis C screening test” is a laboratory test to detect the presence of hepatitis C virus antibodies in the blood. A “hepatitis C diagnostic test” is a laboratory test that detects the presence of the virus in the blood and confirms whether the person whose blood was tested has a hepatitis C virus infection. “Primary care” is family medicine, general pediatrics, primary care, internal medicine, primary care obstetrics, or primary care gynecology, without regard to board certification.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2014

BACKGROUND

Hepatitis C

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that infects the liver and can cause liver cirrhosis or cancer, liver failure, or death. The disease can be acute or chronic. Acute hepatitis C is less severe, but often develops into chronic hepatitis C.

OLR Tracking: KM:KLM:PF:am